**Strategy Research Project**

# Optimizing DoD Information Capabilities and Closing the Public Diplomacy Gap

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**Optimizing DoD Information Capabilities and Closing the Public Diplomacy Gap**

> … I say to you: that we are in a battle and that more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media. And that we are in a media battle in a race for the hearts and minds of our Umma.[1]
>
> —Ayman al-Zawarhiri
> Letter to Al-Zarqawi, 9 July 2005

Throughout history military theorists have attempted to define the true nature of warfare and the strategies necessary to win. The great Carl Von Clausewitz described war as, "nothing but a duel on a larger scale…an act of force to compel the enemy to do our will."[2] While there is much truth to this maxim, winning the duel certainly does not guarantee you will win the war. In this vein, the teachings of Sun Tzu might be more applicable. In his work, The Art of War, he wrote, "To win one hundred victories in one hundred battles is not the acme of skill. To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill."[3] It's clear from his statement that he understood that war has both a physical and psychological aspect to it. In battle Sun Tzu deliberately used information in a coordinated and synchronized manner, to confuse, demoralize and defeat his enemies.[4] Today, the notion of what constitutes victory or defeat is complicated by the reality of the complex and pervasive information environment in which we operate. The lessons gleaned from Operations IRAQI and ENDURING FREEDOM suggest that despite repeatedly winning the tactical engagements, one can easily end up losing the information war and ultimately the strategic victory.

Over the course of the last decade, US Military Forces have been engaged in numerous combat operations and repeatedly demonstrated why they are widely recognized as the most capable military force in history. The overwhelming technical and tactical superiority of US forces has compelled our adversaries to rely on

unconventional methods of warfare. To a large extent, the enemy's methods are focused on manipulating public perceptions in order to attain long term objectives. Their ability to influence public opinion is facilitated by the ubiquitous nature of today's information environment. The DoD Strategic Communication Science and Technology Plan of 2009 came to a similar conclusion when it noted,

> Warfare is changing. While that statement has been true throughout the course of military history, a compelling argument can be made today that the public perceptions and implications of military operations might increasingly outweigh the tangible benefits actually achieved from real combat on the battlefield.[5]

From the adversary's perspective, victory or defeat is no longer solely measured by results of traditional military engagements; rather the results tend to focus on the perceptions shaped in the minds of a much larger audience. In a 2010 speech British General Sir David Richards, remarked, "Conflict today, especially because so much of it is effectively fought through the medium of the Communications Revolution, is principally about and for People - hearts and minds on a mass scale."[6] The Chief of Staff of the US Army, General Ray Ordierno, alluded to this shift in warfare stating, "In the future, it will be increasingly common for the Army to operate in environments with both regular military and irregular paramilitary or civilian adversaries, with the potential for terrorism, criminality, and other complications."[7] Many of these "complications" no doubt reside in the hyper-connected and ever-pervasive information environment of the twenty first century. The Department of Defense (DoD), defines the information environment as the aggregate of individuals, organizations, and systems that collect, process, disseminate or act on information.[8] In this environment, events occurring half a world away are no longer confined to a local area. For the technologically savvy a video account can be transmitted and viewed around the world, generating emotional outrage,

support, or condemnation. The DoD's 2009 Strategic Communication Science and

Technology Plan highlighted this fact by stating,

> The increasingly ubiquitous spread of wireless, cellular, and other
> networked telecommunications technologies is not only enabling the
> emergence of new conventional and non-kinetic capabilities, but is also
> conveying previously unseen advantages to our adversaries, particularly
> non-state actors.[9]

It can be argued that at no other time in history has the common man been able

to so greatly impact the information environment than today. The proliferation of

information technology and social media will continue to empower individuals, groups,

and potential adversaries in ways previously unimaginable. This fact was demonstrated

time and again during the Arab Spring as individuals and groups were able to leverage

these tools to communicate, organize, and raise public awareness both on a local and

global scale. As witnessed in Libya, Egypt, and Syria, this effort motivated thousands to

take part in anti-government protests, despite the threat of retaliation, to demand

accountability of their leaders and force change in their government. There can be no

doubt that the concerted application of information capabilities in today's information

environment can be a powerful weapon for whoever wields it.

In 2009, the Director of National Intelligence issued an annual threat assessment

which stated, "We can expect future adversaries to similarly employ mass media in an

attempt to constrain US courses of action in a future crisis or conflict."[10] This represents

a new reality, requiring the United States Government (USG) to reassess the way it

implements the Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic (DIME) instruments of

national power. Since information is considered one of the instruments of national

power, it is the only one that does not have an agency dedicated solely to oversee its

activities. The bottom line is that more emphasis must be placed on the informational

instrument of national power, to achieve the desired effects in support of the nation's strategic objectives and endstates. In 2007, LTC Lindsey Borg succinctly described the current USG challenge when he wrote:

> Increasingly, conflict takes place in a population's cognitive space, making sheer military might a lesser priority for victory in the Information Age. Use of the nation's hard power is inadequate as the sole – or even primary – means to address an insurgency. Instead, national decision makers must create a synergistic approach that emphasizes the country's soft power capabilities while drawing on complementary efforts of its hard power if necessary.[11]

If this is the new reality, the US must leverage the "I" instrument of national power by effectively making use of its information capabilities. To attain the synergy, described by Borg, key interagency stakeholders including Department of State (DoS), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), DoD, and the White House require a mechanism to ensure engagement in the information environment is coordinated and synchronized. However, such a mechanism does not currently exist and as a result the US does not implement the "I" instrument of national power effectively. Within the USG today, the DoS is not only responsible for the Diplomatic instrument of national power but is also charged with oversight of information activities, which are more commonly referred to as Public Diplomacy (PD). Joint Doctrine defines PD as:

> Those overt international public information activities of the USG designed to promote US foreign policy objectives by seeking to understand, inform, and influence foreign audiences and opinion makers, and by broadening the dialogue between American citizens and institutions and their counterparts abroad.[12]

A historical review of USG attempts to establish an independent organization to coordinate and synchronize PD reveals organizations have existed in the past. Unfortunately, no such organization exists today, despite an enduring requirement for one. Absent such an organization the USG finds itself with a serious PD capability gap.

This PD capability gap leaves the interagency to support PD in a non-standard method, resulting in a disjointed approach that lacks the required unanimity of their information activities. The lack of investment and focus on the "I" instrument of national power has created $2^{nd}$ and $3^{rd}$ order effects within other departments of government. This is particularly painful for the DoD, where the lack of unanimity of information activities exacerbates an already dysfunctional relationship existing among DoD's information capabilities. This dysfunction prevents the military from effectively coordinating and synchronizing its information activities and dominating the information environment. Without a means to effectively engage, inform, and influence foreign populations in a coordinated and synchronized manner, at the USG and DoD level, it leaves others in the information environment the freedom to shape their own interpretation of USG actions and intent to their advantage.

This paper will examine the sequence of events that have led to the current USG PD capability gap and the reasons behind the dysfunctional relationship between DoD information capabilities. It will then suggest ways to gain efficiencies, break stovepipes, and increase unity of effort in order to eliminate the USG PD capability gap and eliminate the dysfunctional relationships that exists within DoD information capabilities. With looming government downsizing and increasing budget cuts the USG must adapt and find solutions or suffer the consequences of losing the information war and ultimately the strategic victory.

Events Leading to the Current USG Capability Gap

In 2007, former US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, gave a speech at Kansas State University during which he conveyed dismay at the US's inability to

effectively execute coordinated and synchronized PD. The following excerpt from his

speech typifies his bewilderment with the situation:

> Public relations was invented in the US, yet we are miserable at
> communicating to the rest of the world what we are about as a society and
> a culture, about freedom and democracy, about our policies and our goals.
> It's just plain embarrassing that al-Qaeda is better at communicating its
> message on the Internet than America. As one foreign diplomat asked a
> couple of years ago, "How has one man in a cave managed to out-
> communicate the world's greatest communication society?" Speed, agility,
> and cultural relevance are not terms that come to mind when discussing
> US strategic communications.[13]

Communicating American ideals and values abroad hasn't always been a

struggle for the USG. The country has a history of creating agencies and organizations

to serve as a mechanism to facilitate PD coordination and synchronization and USG

information engagement abroad. In 1917, a week after entering World War I, President

Woodrow Wilson, recognizing the need to coordinate and synchronize USG information

activities, by executive order created the Committee on Public Information (CPI). Author

Alan Winkler described CPI as an independent government agency tasked to promote

the war domestically and publicize American war aims abroad.[14] The committee,

headed by George Creel, used a variety of methods, including radio, movies, posters,

pamphlets, and other techniques, to fight opposition to the war and persuade Americans

to sacrifice in support of the war effort. By most accounts CPI exceeded all

expectations, both domestically and internationally, demonstrating to the world for the

first time the power of information. But over the course of CPI's existence, Creel's

committee may have done its job too well, cultivating a heightened sense of suspicion,

intolerance, and prejudice for Germans within American society and abroad. After the

war, much of CPI's efforts were considered propaganda and viewed in a very negative

light, by both domestic and foreign populations.[15] In August 1919, President Wilson

dissolved CPI, but the residual impact and negative impression of CPI's work would be felt for years after.

In the years leading up to World War II, the USG once again was left without a viable mechanism to ensure information activities were coordinated and synchronized. It was only after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor that President Roosevelt, acknowledging a PD capability gap, established the Office of War Information (OWI) to effectively consolidate government information services under one organization. The OWI was responsible for the same tasks CPI was responsible for, but due to the mistrust it inherited from CPI, OWI was granted less authority and was less effective.[16] Operating from 1942 to 1945, OWI struggled to work with both DoS and DoD, each of which viewed OWI's mission as a nuisance and unnecessary.[17] Historians viewed OWI as a key institutional actor that played a significant role within the total war effort, touching the lives of civilian populations in East Asia as well as combatants.[18] Despite this fact, at the conclusion of the War, Congress found it easy to justify dissolving OWI, once again leaving the US with a PD capability gap.

As the Cold War set in, it created the need to counter Soviet propaganda and the spread of communism. Once again the US was forced to reestablish a mechanism to effectively coordinate and synchronize PD efforts. In 1953, with the authorization of the Smith-Mundt Act, President Dwight D. Eisenhower established the United States Information Agency (USIA).[19] In an attempt to avoid the pitfalls of CPI and OWI, while safeguarding the American public, Congress included a provision in the Smith-Mundt Act, banning domestic distribution of materials intended for foreign audiences.[20] This constraint shaped the focus of USIA's mission to "understand, inform, and influence

foreign populations in promotion of the national interest, and to broaden the dialogue between Americans and US institutions, and their counterparts abroad."[21] For almost half a century, USIA was able to facilitate PD coordination and synchronization, playing a critical role in establishing and reinforcing US policies and programs abroad. The agency reinforced American embassies and consulates by deploying information specialists to facilitate cultural operations. The agency also oversaw activities that included:

- The Voice of America radio network;

- A global library network in 150 countries;

- English teaching abroad program;

- Exhibits on American life and ideas;

- Thousands of agency-produced documentary films, newsreels, TV programs;

- Exchange programs that brought millions of students, educators, artists and professionals to the US through the Fulbright program.[22]

A significant key to the agency's success was the latitude and ability it was granted to foster collaborative relationships with DoS, DoD, CIA, and other government agencies.[23] Over the years these relationships ebbed and flowed with the changing personalities of those in charge of USIA and as Congress redefined the agency's roles and responsibilities.[24] With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union, the continuation of USIA seemed hard for many in Congress to justify.[25] During the post-Cold-War 90's, the US enjoyed a period of economic prosperity and members of Congress were eager to cut spending by shedding legacy Cold-War institutions.[26] Opponents of USIA, spearheaded by long-term

critic Senator Jesse Helms, contended that USIA's mission was over, and 24-hour news outlets like CNN could fill the role of informing foreign audiences.[27] In October 1998, President Clinton signed the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act, which effectively abolished USIA and integrated the agency's elements into the DoS.[28] In the months and years that followed, the merger saw USIA capabilities reduced, fragmented, or ended entirely. Former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates later called the disbanding of USIA more shortsighted than the reductions of the military, CIA, and foreign affairs officers that occurred during the same time.[29] The disbanding of USIA and the loss of its PD capability would come back to haunt the US in September 2001.

In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, there was wide consensus that the DoS was unable to conduct the coordinated and synchronized PD that the former USIA provided.[30] Worse, those surviving USIA staffers still present in the DoS were few, demoralized, and spread across a bureaucracy that seemed to care little about their work.[31] The USG found itself, once again, with a PD capability gap. Its ability to reach foreign audiences was greatly diminished at a time when communicating with audiences abroad was critical. The DoD was the first to recognize the PD capability gap and attempt to compensate for it. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld established the Office of Strategic Influence (OSI) shortly after 9/11. The mission of OSI was to coordinate and inform foreign audiences about U.S. military operations, influence countries to support war efforts, and discredit disinformation and propaganda.[32] As opposition to OSI grew, based on claims of OSI manipulating foreign media, the Secretary decided to unceremoniously shut the organization down in early 2002.[33]

Since 9/11 the DoS has struggled to make significant improvements in coordinating and synchronizing PD efforts. During testimony to the house foreign relations committee, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, acknowledged that,

> The USG has a lot of tools that we don't use as well as we should. We have abdicated the broadcasting arena where both in TV and radio, which are considered kind of old fashion media, are still very important in a lot of these ungoverned areas, a lot of these difficult places where we are trying to do business.[34]

The Secretary went on to discuss the importance of leveraging social media and highlighting the work of the Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications (CSCC) to counter violent extremism. Established in the fall of 2010, the CSCC's mission is tightly focused on coordinating government wide communication activities abroad to undermine terrorist propaganda and dissuading potential recruits.[35] While recognizing CSCC's mission is a step in the right direction, the Secretary might be the first to agree that CSCC alone does not fill the PD capability gap that exists. Despite it being a whole of government endeavor, it does not appear to support PD efforts outside those designed to counter violent extremism. Unfortunately, the cycle of creating and disbanding organizations like CPI, OWI, and USIA, designed to fill the PD capability gap, continues to plague the US.

What history has clearly demonstrated is the US has an enduring requirement for an organization to coordinate and synchronize PD efforts across the whole of government. Lacking unity at the strategic level has a negative impact at the operational and tactical level of information engagement. Without strategic information guidance government departments and agencies are left to convey US policy on their own, which can vary greatly and collectively send mixed signals to the international community. This inconsistency provides ample opportunity for others in the information environment to

shape their own interpretation of US actions and intent to their advantage. This becomes increasingly evident during times of crisis or conflict, requiring military intervention. In those situations it is vital for the USG and DoD to communicate in a unified manner. Not doing so can result in the loss of US credibility, legitimacy, and sow the seeds of mistrust in the eyes of foreign populations, placing American lives at risk.

Due to the nature of environments requiring military intervention, the execution of information activities predominantly falls upon the shoulders of the military. Paralleling the PD capability gap, the military struggles to coordinate and synchronize its information activities due to its disaggregated approach, which creates dysfunction among its information capabilities.

## Dysfunction among DoD Information Capabilities

Throughout operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan the military has been expected to engage and dominate the adversary on the battlefield, and in the information domain. However, during his time in Iraq, former MNC-I Commander, LTG Thomas Metz observed numerous occasions when the military was unable to mass effects and leverage all of the available tools in the information environment.[36] This inability seems counterintuitive when you consider how extraordinarily proficient the military is at coordinating and synchronizing kinetic fires. The reality is, applying the same approach to coordinating, and synchronizing activities in the information environment does not guarantee commensurate results. Even the ability to assess effects in the information environment differs dramatically. You cannot derive "battle damage" in the information environment through a form of "information" crater analysis as you would for kinetic effects. Determining cognitive effects routinely takes much longer to ascertain and is often not as definitive as kinetic effects. Conducting

operations in the information environment is distinctly different and requires a different approach. To be effective, the military must consider information holistically and approach information engagement in the same way.

Unfortunately the military does not approach information holistically. The DoD has disaggregated the information environment into separate information capabilities and processes which include: Strategic Communications (SC), Public Affairs (PA), Information Operations (IO), and Military Information Support Operations (MISO). Each are independently dedicated to creating effects within the information environment and expected to come together seamlessly during operations. In spite of this expectation, LTG Metz observed cases where, "operations in the information domain were not fully integrated into the battle plan."[37] The problem for military leaders has been the inability to effectively integrate, coordinate, and synchronize information capabilities throughout the spectrum of military operations. This is similar to the PD problem at the USG level. For example, in 2004 the operation to restore control of Fallujah, Iraq, named Operation Vigilant Resolve, failed because operations in the information domain were not integrated into the battle plan, despite superior coalition combat power.[38] Commanders understand they must take an active role in shaping the information environment. Many have witnessed firsthand how the proper application of information capabilities can amplify success or facilitate failure. The frustration expressed by military commanders has not been lost on those who regard themselves as information practitioners.

Regardless of the reality on the battlefield, the military continues to view information activities from a disaggregated perspective. This perspective considers information capabilities as separate and distinct specialties, preventing the military from

taking full advantage of the information domain. The separation of information

capabilities is likely the result of DoD attempts to safeguard the integrity of information

activities designed to inform or influence specific target audiences. The unintended

effect of this disaggregation is the manifestation of a dysfunctional relationship among

the information capabilities, primarily PA, IO, and MISO. The symptoms of their

dysfunction are a lack of integration, bureaucratic stovepipes, and an overall reluctance

to work with each other.[39]

The problem is rooted in the inherent tension between the desire to inform verses

the desire to influence an intended targeted audience. This tension between informing

and influencing fuels the dysfunctional relationship among the information capabilities.

Current military doctrine captures these opposing activities as inform and influence

activities. Inform and influence activities are defined as, the integration of designated

information-related capabilities in order to synchronize themes, messages, and actions

with operations to inform US and global audiences, influence foreign audiences, and

affect adversary and enemy decision making.[40] Within the paradigm of inform and

influence, the two primary military messaging capabilities are PA and MISO. The

contention between the two is delineating where one effort begins and the other ends.

In reality, there is no clear break or dividing line between the two activities. They both

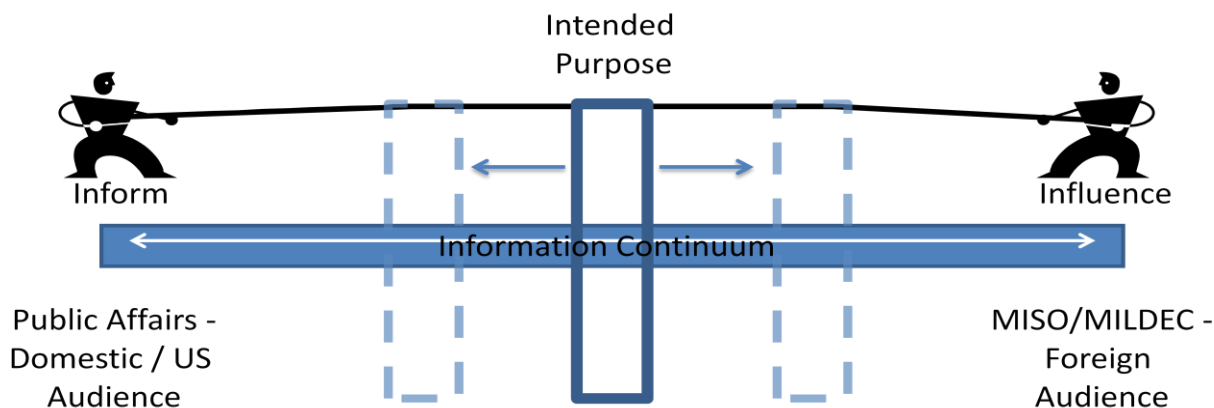reside in a continuum of information activity.

Figure 1. The Inform and Influence Paradigm

As illustrated in figure 1, the primary purpose of PA activity is to inform the local or domestic audience of US operations and objectives, but the unintended second and third order effects of such activity have a degree of influence or informing of adversaries. Likewise, the primary purpose of MISO activity is to influence and change the behavior of a foreign target audience, but the unintended second and third order effect can inform or influence a domestic audience. The degree to which an information activity informs or influences can vary based upon the information capability through which it is being conveyed. In the end, today's ubiquitous information environment does not restrict information to a purely inform or influence purpose, despite the intention.

The DoD function that was intended to mitigate this apparent dichotomy between informing and influencing is IO, however, the problem still exists. Since IO's inception, in the 1990's, it has been a contentious concept. Commanders initially viewed IO as, another staff stovepipe with undefined and un-resourced missions, that didn't seem relevant to combat operations.[41] This perception was compounded by the fact the IO career field has been continually undermanned. For example, in 2006 the Army had almost a 40% shortage of required IO personnel.[42] Over the years, this shortage forced

many commanders to utilize officers from other information capabilities, PA, and MISO, to assume the IO function.[43] In the rush to produce IO practitioners, the military has generated multiple courses to familiarize and educate potential IO planners; however, there is no mandate that one must attend a specific course prior to assuming duties as a Joint IO planner. As a result, IO practitioners have been regarded as information generalists expected to integrate distinct information specialties into operational planning. A 2008 Center for Army Lessons Learned study concluded, "It is impossible for an IO officer to become an expert in all the diverse elements of IO during a five week training program."[44] The mission of IO is to serve as an integration function, by pulling together the distinctly specialized information capabilities and integrating them into the military planning process. In practice IO officers have attempted to control the other information capabilities. This effort only served to alienate the IO planner and create dysfunction among the information capabilities.[45]

In 2011, the Secretary of Defense redefined IO, removing IO's emphasis on capabilities and refocusing its efforts on integration. His refined definition for IO is, "The integrated employment, during military operations, of information-related capabilities in concert with other lines of operation to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp the decision-making of adversaries and potential adversaries while protecting our own."[46] The rationale behind the change was that the previous definitions led to an excessive focus on IO's five core capabilities: MISO, military deception (MILDEC), operation security (OPSEC), computer network operations (CNO), and electronic warfare (EW). In practice, this led to confusion between the distinction of the core capabilities and IO as an integrating staff function. In the final analysis, IO is meant to be an integrating

function designed to identify information related opportunities, facilitate the planning and synchronization of information related capabilities and achieve desired effects. However, IO has failed to resolve the integration, coordination, and synchronization problem that exists within DoD. A combination of inadequate training, resourcing, and doctrinal confusion has caused IO to fall short of delivering on intended mission.[47] Leveraging IO planners as an integrating function is treating the symptoms of dysfunction and not addressing the problem of disaggregation.

The dysfunctional relationship among the information capabilities is akin to a "tribal" mentality which works against collaboration and integration, to the detriment of mission accomplishment. In reality, military information capabilities are more alike than they are different. To understand the root problem a greater understanding of how professionals in the two main communicating capabilities, PA and MISO, view themselves and their functions.

Public Affairs is defined as, those public information, command information, and community engagement activities directed toward both the external and internal publics with interest in the DoD.[48] Public Affairs officers are charged with providing truthful, accurate and timely information to the public, the domestic and international media, and military members. For PA officers their legitimacy is based on their credibility. For that reason, PA prides itself on conveying factual information, not focused on directing or manipulating US public actions or opinion.[49] Contrary to IO training, all PA education and qualification training is conducted at the US Defense Information School, lasting 43 days in total. The instruction is designed to ensure PA practitioners, throughout DoD, receive the same instruction on the performance of PA duties and are grounded in

common methodology, theory, and doctrine.[50] A unit PA officer is normally the commander's principle spokesperson, PA advisor, and member of the commander's personal staff.[51] This unique role and relationship with the commander can create friction and dysfunction among the other information capabilities.

During operations in Iraq, the PA, IO, and MISO relationship in many headquarters was observed to be tenuous at best.[52] While recognizing the benefit of integrating, many PA officers were unwilling to be part of an IO led coordination process.[53] The rationale behind the reluctance to closely associate PA and IO apparently stems from the fear that PA's association with MISO influence capabilities would call PA's credibility into question.[54] Some PA officers cling to the idea that any association with MISO and IO will cause them to lose credibility and forever taint their ability to communicate effectively.[55] The Public Relations Society of America, Board of Directors have publically advocated for a "firewall" of separation between IO and PA in order to reduce confusion and protect the integrity of PA activities.[56] While this perspective seems logical to some, it runs counter to the reality of the inform and influence paradigm, and creates potential for disjointed information activities that create conditions ripe for "information fratricide" to occur. A less draconian analogy of maintaining a degree of separation between inform and influence activities is to describe it as a "chain link fence". This analogy implies both information activities are woven together to foster coordination and synchronization while accommodating the individuality of each activity's purpose. In practice, this type of relationship can be achieved and successful. In Iraq, MNC-I, MNF-I and MNF-W were successful in massing effects in the information domain, by effectively bridging the firewall between

IO and PA to achieved desired end-states, without violating the rules of either discipline.[57]

Similarly, retired Colonel Curt Boyd has asserted that, "having a wall between PA and MISO is counterproductive."[58] A 2012 Rand Afghanistan study seems to back this assertion by finding, "the division between MISO and PA worked to the advantage of Taliban propagandists, who routinely accuse US forces of needlessly causing civilian casualties."[59] Contrary to popular belief, MISO activities are grounded in the truth. In order to be effective they depend upon the same level of credibility PA activities seek to preserve. In fact, the law prohibits MISO from targeting US citizens.[60] Because MISO and PA must have the trust of the target audience, and because trust and credibility depend on facts, truth forms the foundation of both MISO and PA.[61] As it has been pointed out previously, PA's aversion to being associated with MISO is due to the stigma drawn from the inference that MISO is analogous to propaganda. Propaganda is defined as any form of <u>adversary</u> communication, especially of a biased or misleading nature, designed to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, or behavior of any group in order to benefit the sponsor, either directly or indirectly.[62] Ironically, one of the primary functions of both MISO and PA is to refute and counter enemy propaganda and disinformation.

The predominance of MISO forces reside in the Army, as the military's primary capability dedicated entirely to influence activities. A component of the Special Operations community, MISO forces receive extensive foreign language skills, regional and cultural orientation and are trained, organized, and equipped to deploy and conduct operations in support of combat operations, peacetime operation, civil authorities, and

special operations forces. [63] Differing from IO training, MISO education and qualification, for all U.S. military services, is conducted exclusively at the U.S Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, lasting up to 42 weeks, depending on the length of language training. A trained MISO practitioner is able to conduct, "Planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audience to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups and individuals in a manner favorable to the originator's objectives."[64] Successfully executing influence activities is both an art and science, uniquely different from the execution of other war fighting functions. A major problem observed in Afghanistan and Iraq was that IO planners did not adequately understand MISO and its capabilities.[65] As a result, IO and MISO were viewed as working at cross-purposes, lacking compatibility, and unnecessarily complicating operations. This resulted in commanders being confused as to the proper application of influence activities.[66]

## The Way Ahead

Over the years, especially since 9/11, the US has come to appreciate the importance of information, from the strategic through the tactical level. Despite this appreciation, it continues to be a challenge for the US to coordinate and synchronize its information efforts effectively. This paper has highlighted capability gaps and areas of dysfunction that must be solved in order for the US to effectively engage in the information environment. The following are several recommendations to solve the problems identified and equip the US to more effectively engage and dominate the information environment.

First, the USG should reestablish an organization capable of facilitating

coordination and synchronization of PD in the 21st century and beyond. This

coordinating organization should have the requisite mandate, resourcing, and authority

to conduct PD efforts over the long term. It must also have the mandate to coordinate

and synchronize across USG departments and dedicated funding to perform its mission.

Additionally, this organization must be capable of conducting the full spectrum of legacy,

current, and future information technology, as well as leveraging capabilities unique to

departments across the USG. Ideally this organization would be independent, similar to

the USIA in the early days of its existence. If the organization is to remain under the

umbrella of the DoS, it must be afforded operational latitude and a degree of autonomy

to conduct its activities, and the advocacy to conduct PD activities for the long term.

Second, DoD must abandon information disaggregation. As discussed

previously, information is an instrument of national power, as such it must be

considered holistically and not piecemeal. Greater efficiencies can be gained by

bringing inform and influence information capabilities closer together. The

disaggregation of DoD information capabilities is the true impediment to fully integrating

them into operational planning. Charging IO to force their integration is dealing with the

symptoms not the problem. As Brigadier General Huba Wass de Czege pointed out,

"Getting the most value from all IO capabilities requires a far greater depth of expertise

than is achievable by IO generalists within current IO paradigms.[67]

Over the years many have advocated for the merger of IO, PA, and MISO,

creating a holistic information career field. A 2005 article by Major George Brown,

highlights the potential benefits gained from creating an Information Warfare branch.

They include eliminating responsibility gaps and redundancies, increasing personnel talent, and providing a common lexicon to conduct information operations.[68] Creating a holistic information career field, would facilitate a comprehensive approach to information activities. It would also produce information planners with experience executing at least one, if not more, of the information capabilities at the functional level, prior to planning at the senior level. This concept is similar to the one laid out in the 2003 DoD "IO Roadmap", which described the development of information professionals who were functional experts in one of more of the specialized information capabilities, serving alternately as planners and functional experts throughout their career.[69] It would also provide commanders a single point of contact, with the knowledge, experience, and access to all information capabilities; empower them to speak authoritatively about information activities. The following graphic developed by COL Chip Bircher helps to illustrate what an information career field might look like:



Figure 2 Communication Career Field [70]

Merging the information capabilities into a holistic information career field would inherently foster a more unified application of information capabilities. As a career field Information professionals would enter the profession and receive common core information training to establish a foundation of understanding across all inform and influence disciplines. These information professionals would then be able to branch off into specialized disciplines of training and follow career paths that would alternate between planning and functional assignments. Senior Information professionals would be exponentially more prepared to assume information planner roles at various levels of command. This consolidated career field approach will generate a more holistic information professional, with inherent connective tissue to the other information disciplines, reducing dysfunction and redundant manning requirements.

Third, with the increased emphasis on CYBER related activities and rise of CYBERCOM, every effort should be made to ensure the newly merged Information experts are integrated into CYBER organizations. It is acknowledged that "Cyberspace is a technological repository and means of transit for information, but its content originates with people"[71] The DoD should conduct a study to find out where these inform and influence personnel should be employed within CYBERCOM.

If dominating the information environment is vital to achieving our national strategic objectives, the current USG approach is inadequate. The US must not pay lip service to the importance of information, it must treat it with the same regard it treats the other instruments of national power. Without implementing the aforementioned changes, the US will continue to find itself vulnerable to others intent on discrediting and disparaging US efforts abroad. The effects of which could ultimately undermine US

national security interests. These changes will require long-term vision and leadership

willing to break current parochial paradigms. The bottom line is the status quo is no

longer a viable option.

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